

Overcoming a problem

I strained my eyes to take a better look at the screen before me. When the words finally sunk into my thick skull, I let out a gasp of stupefaction and disbelief. My eyes widened and my jaw dropped. Still staring at the content of the Whatsapp conversation incredulously, I felt my heart lodged in my throat and my mind whirling in confusion. This is too bizarre and ridiculous! There was no way Keane could have done this to our best friend Jon! Yes, Keane could be quite a handful and a silly clown with his eccentric antics, but I trust that he knew better than to send such an awful message to everyone on Facebook. Had he gone bonkers?

With bated breath, I picked up my mobile phone and tried to call Keane but no one answered. That got me even more curious. Momentarily, a veil of suspense and doubt hung in the air, and I somewhat felt ashamed of not trusting my best friend. Still, I could not get hold of him and that made me even more inquisitive and suspicious. Hours flew past when like thunder out of the clear blue sky, my mobile phone vibrated and it was Keane. With my fingers trembling with anxiety and apprehension, I picked it up only to hear an unfamiliar voice.

“Hello! How are you? Guess who am I?” the voice rattled on cheekily. The tone was somehow strange as Keane never spoke in proper sentences. It was always punctuated with a Singlish expression of “lah”, “leh” or “lohs”. Furthermore, why would I have to guess who it was when it would be clearly stated in my caller ID? The whirlpool of confusion in my mind kept swirling and then and there, I found myself spiraling into the vortex of the whirlpool of utter bewilderment and bafflement. What exactly was going on? First, the serious malicious comments about Jon on social media and Instagram and then now this even weirder call from an imposter speaking in a heavy accent? An imposter! Yes! A hacker! Keane’s accounts had been hacked! I got off the line immediately, convinced that Keane’s mobile phone must have been stolen.

Suddenly, a volley of thoughts assailed my mind, all of which I was furiously and desperately trying to find an answer to overcome the problem we had on hand,” Whom should we report to? How do I get hold of the real Keane now? How should we delete these messages on social media?” Not knowing where to begin, I let out a yelp of frustration. It was then that I heard a knock on the door and Mum popped her head in.

“Is everything alright, dear?” she queried in a concerned tone, her brows lifted. I spun around and suddenly felt a surge of energy. The solution to all my questions had knocked on the door at the right time! I dragged Mum onto the sofa and started rattling off the series of events to her like a machine gun. When the volley of “gunshots” finally ceased, I found myself heaving and panting breathlessly, much to Mum’s amusement. Then, putting on a

solemn look, she instructed me to pass her my laptop and like a computer whizz, she got into action.

First, we tried to call Keane from home using the class contact list. True enough, the class clown had misplaced his mobile phone and to make matters worse, he realized the consequences of not having set up any form of security pin whatsoever only after losing his mobile phone! Without wasting a second, we got Keane to send an email to all his contacts to announce that his account had been hacked and to apologise with regards to the comment about Jon (being a nerd and a bookworm which was not nice at all.) Then, we reported the hacking of the accounts to Instagram and Facebook and it was after a few hours that Keane's social media accounts were suspended. It was then that Mum, Keane and I finally managed to breathe properly again. Poor Keane, whom we had been discussing and solving the problem together on his mother's Whatsapp via Facetime, thanked Mum profusely. If not for Mum's calm and systematic approach to overcome this episode, I think both Keane and I would not have known what to do.

"No problem! Well, guess I'm not so much of a Boomer like you always laugh at me about, aren't I?" Mum winked naughtily at me. Momentarily, I felt the tips of my ears turning searing hot and my face burning red. On hindsight, it was only after that incident that I truly understood what Mum had been reminding us about. When facing a challenge, it is critical that we stay calm and composed. Then, by analysing the situation objectively like a bystander, think about the critical issues at hand. Finally, with much clarity of the mind and calmness of the heart, we can then tackle each issue by taking measured steps to overcome the problem systematically. Though it may seem all too profound, I witnessed Mum doing just that. With my face still burning red, I smiled sheepishly at Mum and gave her a thumbs-up.